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ABSTRACT

Presently there are approximately 70 active formal higher educational consortia in the U. S. along with numerous other instances of voluntary academic cooperation. However, at a time in which cooperative efforts continue to expand, the benefits of these same efforts are being examined and questioned seriously by educators. The Danforth Conference on Consortia for the first time brought together not only consortium directors but also faculty and administrators from a variety of higher educational consortia. This pilot effort involved teams of approximately six representatives from 8 consortia, plus other interested individuals. The purpose of the conference was to provide for a free exchange of ideas among faculty and administrators concerning the benefits, pitfalls, and innovative ideas of various consortial arrangements. The conference planning committee felt that 3 major themes should be emphasized in the discussions: an examination of the potential benefits of various cooperative arrangements, an open and honest discussion of the obstacles that often prevent cooperation among faculty and administrators, and a realistic assessment of the future possibilities for voluntary cooperation. The articles in this booklet are individual reactions from various perspectives--faculty, administrators, consortium directors--to the issues raised during the conference. (Author/PG)

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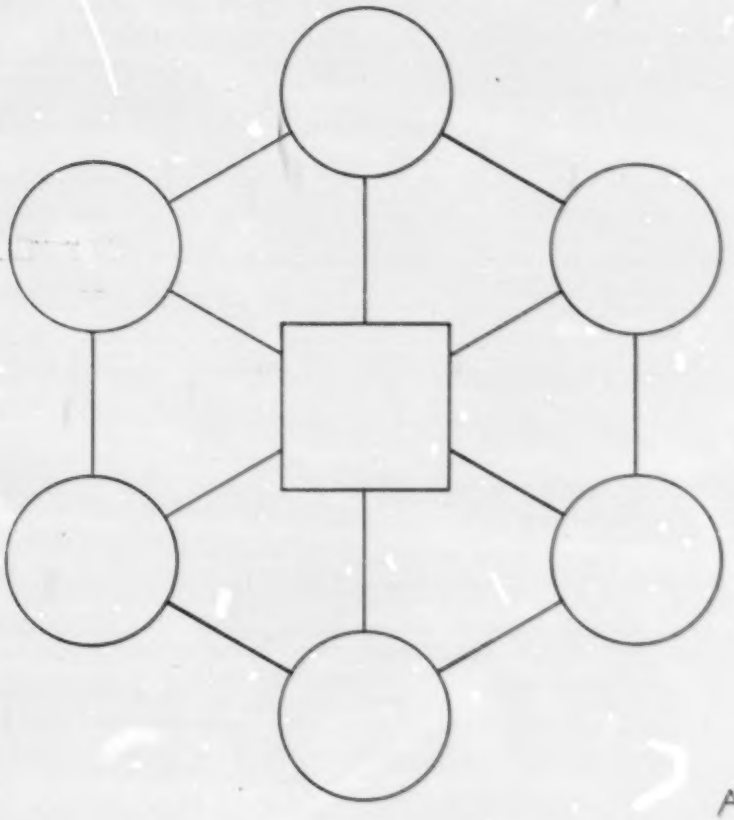
Higher Educational Consortia: Idea of the Past or Wave of the Future?

Report of the Danforth Foundation's Conference on Consortia



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Fordyce House
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INTRODUCTION

Presently there are approximately seventy active formal higher educational consortia in this country along with numerous other instances of voluntary academic cooperation. However, at a time in which cooperative efforts continue to expand, the benefits – realized or potential – of these same efforts are being examined and questioned seriously by educators.

Colleges and universities face a variety of difficult questions today: financial prospects, the proper role and mission of various institutional types, changing academic programs, etc. Cooperation is one possible means of dealing with such questions. To this point, however, ideas concerning academic cooperation have been exchanged most often among those in the "business of cooperation," especially the executive directors of active consortia. These directors and coordinators for several years have held seminars to discuss current cooperative programs and issues before the annual meetings of the American Council on Education and the American Association for Higher Education. The Danforth Conference on Consortia, however, for the first time brought together not only consortium directors but also faculty and administrators from a variety of higher educational consortia. This pilot effort involved teams of approximately six representatives from eight formal consortia, plus other interested individuals. (A list of participants appears at the end of this booklet.)

The purpose of the Conference was to provide for a free exchange of ideas among faculty and administrators concerning the benefits, pitfalls, and innovative ideas of various consortial arrangements. The Conference came at a time when the "consortium movement" was, and is, going through a period of reevaluation as to the financial and educational costs and benefits of cooperation, the importance of cooperative efforts to institutional survival, the place of voluntary cooperation in connection with state efforts at coordination, etc. Also, while realizing that ideas from one consortium cannot be transplanted easily to another, since each set of institutions is unique, the Foundation hoped that each individual educator and institutional group could return home with some useful ideas gained from others.

The Conference Planning Committee felt that three major themes should be emphasized in the discussions: an examination of the potential benefits of various cooperative arrangements, an open and honest discussion of the obstacles which often prevent cooperation among faculty and administrators, and a realistic assessment of the future possibilities for voluntary cooperation.

The first two themes were the focus of several panel discussions led by faculty, administrators, and consortium directors. Also, small group sessions dealt with the issue of faculty-administrative roadblocks to cooperation, and a closing panel of consortium directors examined the cooperative process from their unique perspective. (See the Conference program outline later in this booklet.)

The third theme – the possibilities for voluntary cooperation – was introduced to the Conference through two excellent lectures by Robert O. Berdahl, Professor of Higher Education, State University of New York at Buffalo, and W. Max Wise, Professor of Higher Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. Berdahl, following an anthropological examination of the way in which humans have traditionally been led to cooperate, stressed that cooperation among colleges and universities would come about through a combination of outside money (the "green carrot" in Berdahl's terms) and state-enforced coordination (the "state stick"). Voluntary consortia still have a future, if, and only if, they can bring about meaningful cooperation among higher educational institutions. In fact, the possibility exists for state agencies to foster and assist academic consortia, if they prove themselves to be in the public interest. However, to encourage substantial cooperation, a state agency with potential enforcement power may have to be waiting in the wings.

Professor Wise's assessment of the possibilities for voluntary cooperation was much more pessimistic. In the face of major needs facing higher education, voluntary cooperation in his opinion has not produced any meaningful problem-solving agreements. The situation for private higher educational institutions is especially acute, and there is no way these institutions can maintain their traditional independence from other public and private institutions. A new set of relationships among institutions will emerge that does not resemble voluntary cooperation to this point, especially state-led joint development of public and private higher education. (Dr. Wise used the New York State Regionalization Plan as an example of a new emerging form of cooperation.) In light of this assessment, Wise felt that voluntary consortia were basically "a nice idea whose time has passed."

The articles in this booklet are not an attempt to rehash the Conference discussions sparked by the Berdahl and Wise presentations or by any of the panels. Instead they are individual reactions from various perspectives – faculty members, administrators, consortium directors – to the issues raised during the Conference. It is hoped that this method, rather than the traditional summarizing of discussions in a conference report, will provide a better impression of the existing and potential impact of the Conference.

In the first section Thomas J. Diener and B. Richard Berg examine the variety of barriers and perceptions which frequently have prevented academic cooperation from developing. Since the Conference was the first with wide representation of faculty members from various consortia, two articles by Lewis D. Patterson and Lawrence Belle focus special attention on the need for faculty participation in cooperative arrangements. The issue of voluntary cooperation vs. statewide coordination is treated in a third section by Fritz H. Grupe and Lawrence E. Fox. Grupe writes from the special perspective of New York State and its effort at regionalization of higher education, and Fox eyes the issue from a substantially different viewpoint in Massachusetts. Herbert H. Wood provides a number of interesting reflections on the Conference from the consortium director's outlook in a fifth section. Finally, a summary statement is provided concerning the outlook for voluntary cooperation, based on the Conference deliberations.

William C. Nelsen
Program Executive
The Danforth Foundation

An Outline of Barriers to Cooperation in Higher Education

Thomas J. Diener

Significant barriers stand in the way of cooperative efforts in higher education. Some of these are matters of attitude, some of logistics, some of organizational structure; some reflect prevailing faculty values and the current system of academic rewards. Whatever their origin they impede the development of cooperative activities and oftentimes stymie efforts even to initiate honest interinstitutional discussions.

It is essential that these obstacles be identified and examined with care. To ignore them or treat them lightly is a disservice both to the institutions and people involved and the public at large (which ultimately is the loser when higher education fails to cure its ailments).

What are some of these barriers? Many of them relate to institutions of higher education as organizations; some of them relate specifically to faculty in colleges and universities.

A weak commitment by the chief executive officer and governing board. Cooperation requires a new world view on the part of many institutions. Much of the history of higher education in this country speaks to individual effort and the strength of single institutions. A 19th century college was to be an enclave physically isolated from its supportive society; certainly it was to be unsullied by the influence or aid of a neighboring college. Self-sufficiency, independence, isolation – these were the hallmarks of the 19th century college.

They are not adequate for the 20th century. The institutional vision today must be one of interdependence. Not many institutions will survive viewing the future through 19th century spectacles.

Few institutions blatantly voice opposition to all forms of cooperation. There are many, however, who approach these relationships reluctantly, remain suspicious of other's motives, defensive about "their territory," and wary of any alliances viewed as unnecessarily entangling.

Crucial to the nature and strength of the institution's will to cooperate is the president. Unless that person is openly supportive of interinstitutional dialogue, planning, and program development, the very best work of his associates can only fall short. Especially important is the president's work with his governing board, keeping that body informed of cooperative efforts and their consequences.

Thomas J. Diener is Director, Institute of Higher Education Research and Service, University of Alabama, and has assisted the efforts of a number of consortia in the south.

Inadequate mechanisms for implementing decisions. Commitment by top institutional officers is not alone adequate. Policy decisions made by the cooperating institutions must be translated into activities and programs.

The process of translating an idea (policy) into reality (operations) is not a self-starting or self-perpetuating one. Institutional personnel should be specifically designated to follow through on the implementation of each policy decision. Procedures should be established by which cooperative activities are initiated, monitored, and evaluated.

Insufficient communication. This obstacle is not unique to cooperative activities but it is a roadblock of sizable proportions. It may be useful to designate one person on each participating campus to plan and carry out a systematic and comprehensive program of information about cooperative activities aimed at specific audiences.

Geographic dispersion. This obstacle can be overcome but the problems caused by distance cannot be ignored. Some geographically dispersed consortia are using special telephone and other communication systems to link themselves more closely. This technology permits immediate, extensive, and continuing communication among committees, faculty, and leaders in the cooperative programs.

Diversity. Differences in traditions, goals, or clientele have in the past prevented cooperation among institutions. The increasing homogenization of higher education dashes the myth that institutional differences really are so clear as they once were. More importantly, some recent cooperative efforts now represent attempts to build strength based on difference. That is, each participating institution brings special insight and expertise to bear on planning and program efforts common to all members of a cooperative.

Unbridled enthusiasm. A quick way to vitiate long-term cooperation is to enter uncritically into interinstitutional arrangements. Unrealistic expectations – such as hopes for dramatic economies in money or time, for example – when unfulfilled can lead only to disillusionment. Sharp delineation of goals, costs, and benefits are requisite to effective cooperation.

Lack of money Cooperation is expensive. Good examples of cost-cutting or cost-sharing can be found, but the majority of cooperative programs impose both indirect and direct costs on each participating institution. How much institutional money can be allocated to cooperative ventures? How much extra-institutional money is available and how can it be secured? The nurture of funding sources requires patience, planning, and skill. Each consortium, led by its governing group, must face squarely and with regularity the issue of financial support.

Lack of faculty participation and support. Cooperative arrangements have usually been established by administrative officers for administrative purposes. Faculty are wary of activities about which they have little information, have had no hand in planning, and see no benefit – indeed often view as a threat to their traditional use of time and energy.

Perhaps basic to faculty participation in cooperative efforts is a reworking of the present system of rewards. Many faculty desire opportunities for professional stimulation and growth. They desire recognition by their colleagues and institutions. They desire time. These professional needs are now met in a single institution mode.

Increasingly, those faculty working in interinstitutional activities must find these same rewards in a cooperative mode. If cooperation is only a code word for overload, extra duty and little or no compensation, faculty interest will not be easily aroused or long sustained.

Success in overcoming this particular obstacle – lack of faculty participation and support – will identify many of the more mature voluntary cooperative arrangements in the 1970's.

Educators' Perceptions of Obstacles to Cooperation

B. Richard Berg

The future of interinstitutional cooperation depends upon the desire and ability of educational leaders to perceive their mission as being broader than the scope of any one college or university. In defining educational leaders, I include both faculty and administrators.

Two years of study on the programs and problems of higher education consortia in the metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis have convinced me that most institutional leaders perceive the dangers of parochialism but have not been able to move beyond recognition of the problem to the stage where interinstitutional cooperation can be truly effective.

B. Richard Berg, Vice President for Business and Public Affairs, the Lindenwood Colleges, has just completed a dissertation dealing with the perceptions of educators toward cooperation in two midwest consortia.

Some of the problems facing institutions of higher education today are the result of a lack of cooperation and careful planning in the past – duplication of programs and facilities, excess student capacity, wide variations in supply and demand in particular fields of study. The difficult situation which these problems cause for individual institutions tends to sharpen competition for scarce resources and make interinstitutional cooperation even more difficult. Moreover, it is hard for individuals to contemplate the broader educational needs of the community as a whole when they are struggling to maintain the vitality of an embattled institution whose health is their immediate responsibility.

How then do educational leaders perceive the obstacles which hinder cooperation? And how can they move beyond perception to implementation? The answer to the first question is shown in the following chart compiled from the responses of participants in the Danforth Conference on Consortia to a questionnaire distributed at the opening session. The second question remains unanswered.

RANKING OF OBSTACLES TO INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN DANFORTH CONFERENCE ON CONSORTIA

(note that some ranks were tied eliminating next lowest rank)

	Faculty	Consortium Staff	Administrators	Other	Entire Group
a. Geographical isolation	7th	8th	6th	6th	7th
b. Legal restrictions	9th	7th	9th	9th	9th
c. Limited financial resources	4th	5th	3rd	2nd	2nd
d. Institutional parochialism	1st	2nd	1st	1st	1st
e. Lack of concern for the public interest	8th	8th	8th	6th	8th
f. A reluctance to cooperate with competitors	4th	6th	2nd	3rd	2nd
g. Personal or institutional ambition	3rd	3rd	4th	5th	4th
h. Lack of time to devote to leadership in cooperative activities	2nd	4th	5th	6th	6th
i. Other	4th	1st	7th	4th	5th
Number of respondents	21	10	20	5	56

Although the low number of respondents limits the scientific value of the findings, the reactions of Conference participants provide several useful indications:

The conferees ranked institutional parochialism as the most significant barrier to interinstitutional cooperation. Ranking next were the problems of limited financial resources and a reluctance to cooperate with competitors. When we separate faculty responses from the rest of the group, the problem of having sufficient time to devote to cooperative activities ranks second. Legal barriers to cocperation, which was cited as the most significant obstacle to cooperation when I surveyed the attitudes of presidents of publicly supported institutions in Missouri last year, ranked last in the responses of those participating in the Danforth Conference.

Some of the "other" obstacles cited, especially by consortium staff members, revealed considerable insight. One staff member wrote "the problems which paralyze consortia are the same that plague the internal workings of our member institutions — status and prestige, competition for scarce resources, ambiguities over goals, priorities, etcetera."

We must broaden our perception of both the necessary and the possible as we strive to move beyond perception to cooperative planning and action.

Faculty Participation in Key Issue Areas

Lewis D. Patterson

In a real sense a first-time interconsortium conference involving a majority of faculty members represented an exploratory, risk-taking experiment. Certainly no one could guarantee that the topics selected for examination or the program strategy would sustain the interest of institutional instructors from somewhat dissimilar cooperatives for a period of three days, let alone lead to meaningful and constructive directives for related future educational development. It was never anticipated that the Conference would or should conclude in one harmonious viewpoint on the virtues of and procedures for institutions consorting with each other. In fact, the program planning committee explicitly encouraged varying viewpoints in order to assure an openness on each issue raised. In retrospectively assessing the Conference proceedings, it is this writer's opinion that the experience was well worth the time and effort and that the Conference opened the door for similar profitable undertakings in the future. Some observations concerning faculty participation that are supportive of this conclusion are offered below.

In reporting on specific consortium programs in areas such as confronting urban problems, serving the disadvantaged and relating to the community at large, the faculty representatives demonstrated very clearly that they can articulate and engage in dialogue effectively in a setting with institutional and consortium administrators. This is not a trivial point when one realizes that most consortia in their current stage of development are primarily organizations designed by and for administrators and that faculty generally have had little experience in interinstitutional programs.

After narrating case study programs, the faculty spokesmen skillfully identified and analyzed issues on a scale broader than just the individual projects in which they were involved. Salient concerns to which they called attention included:

1. Providing faculty with adequate time for consortium participation.

2. Involving faculty in the planning, governance, and evaluation of consortium programming.

3. Developing incentive for faculty consortium involvement by modifying the institutional reward systems.

Lewis D. Patterson is currently a Staff Associate of the American Association for Higher Education in charge of AAHE's new program of service to educators involved with consortia and other cooperative arrangements in higher education. Previously he was a Program Director of the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education.

It would be unfair to conclude that the faculty were narrow and selfish in the concerns they expressed. Rather, they offered realistic guidelines for tapping the resourcefulness of their colleagues in consortium development. The cynicism that they expressed was not in the potential of consortia if properly conceived but whether administrators would structure their involvement appropriately and meaningfully. In looking for future directives, it seems reasonable to conclude that in-depth involvement of faculty in interinstitutional programs will represent an advanced and positive level of consortium maturity.

Consortia Should Not Be Confused with Rose Gardens

Lawrence Belle

For a faculty member who has been only sometimes and recently admitted to the honored circle of administrators, the Conference on Consortia proved to be an enlightening and more importantly heartening experience. Equipped with the conventional bias of my faculty background, I went to the Conference anticipating an assembly of lightening rod salesmen where the exponents of consortia would peddle yet another device for remedying the perennial "crisis in higher education." However, on the contrary the Conference was characterized by the rare and good qualities of candor and realism. The impulse to oversell the benefits of voluntary cooperation comes principally, I suspect, not from consortium directors and their like, though of course their positions prohibit them from indulging in wanton modesty. Rather the impulse is often found among college and university presidents who in order to convenience tight-fisted boards and skeptical faculties are forced to promise, and they themselves come to believe in, altogether too dramatic and rapid results issuing from interinstitutional cooperation. This postscript will, I hope, reflect the laudable tenor of the Conference by briefly and candidly considering some of the historical and structural inhibitions to voluntary cooperation.

Colleges and universities are medieval foundations and as such for good or ill have a keen regard for their liberties, immunities and autonomy. As heads-up businessmen and ironically state legislators seldom tire of reminding us, they are in their organization and management practices archaic and irrational enterprises. Whether the uniqueness and autonomy claimed by academic communities is real or illusory, fruitful or inefficient, institutions of such a mind do not readily lend themselves to amalgamation, conglomeration or indeed voluntary cooperation.

Lawrence Belle is a member of the faculty of Alfred University in addition to serving as a Deputy Director of the College Center of the Finger Lakes.

Despite the seemingly retrograde nature of colleges and universities some degree of voluntary cooperation after innumerable and delicate negotiations has been realized. In those matters not touching the heart of the traditional academic activities – landscape services, joint purchasing, computer services, some field study programs, etc. – cooperation has taken place. But rarely when it comes to the bread and butter, day-to-day business of colleges and universities, that is, our English Department giving its class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:00 to our students, have consortia made much of an impact. This is not to say that cooperation involving a substantial number of faculty and students crossing institutional structures, curriculums, calendars and boundaries is impossible, but as with Buckminster Fuller's brilliantly logical and pragmatic solutions to the world's ills, there are some existential difficulties.

There are at least two major handicaps to substantial interinstitutional cooperation: administrators and faculty. Consortia have been by and large the creations of administrators. While it would be grossly unfair to assert that the prospect of more abundant educational and intellectural opportunities was absent from their calculations, the anticipation of saving and perhaps making money shared at least equally in the act of foundation. Frequent and contrary academic prejudice notwithstanding, as we all know saving money, indeed making money, need not be an ignoble notive. The trouble is that it is unlikely that voluntary cooperation will reward its administrative advocates in this manner, at least not very evidently and readily.

As presently designed, most active consortia are less likely to produce program cutbacks as they are to create new cooperative programs, requiring both financial and personnel resources. This is known as "there is no such thing as a free lunch" principle. For example, the more fully a faculty member becomes involved in carrying out a consortium program, the less time he will have to devote to the regular programs of his home institution; that is, English 230, Section 3, M. W. F., 10:00. At this point enter the Dean. He still needs three sections of English 230 and therefore requests additional funds for part-time instruction or he will not permit the faculty member to go off and cooperate. The Dean is not being small-minded, it is just that he knows, whatever the rhetoric of cooperation might be, that it is his job to mind the store.

Ultimately voluntary cooperative arrangements may gain sufficient stature and power to redistribute large segments of the faculty manpower housed and paid for by the respective member institutions in a more efficient and educationally effective manner over the entire consortium. However, until such time as that happens, programs involving substantive academic cooperation are likely to be governed by the "no free lunch" principle. Unless the administrators at member institutions come to realize and accept the fact that substantive academic cooperation will cost more, not less, during the intermediate future, then it will not come to pass.

The average faculty member has been described, not inappropriately I think, as having the characteristics and mentality of a petty craftsman. He values the professional brotherhood of his discipline and perhaps the functional utility of his department. He frequently regards the college or university at which he happens to be located as a large market pavilion in which he and the other petty craftsmen set up their stalls. While it does afford certain advantages, like keeping the rain off his head and the wolf from the door, it is generally considered inadequate for his finest aspirations, mainly because it is run by administrators and to some extent because it is used by students. Moreover, maintenance of the pavilion makes altogether inordinate demands by way of administrative and committee work. It is therefore historical and psychologically understandable, if not necessarily logical and desirable, that when he is invited to attend meetings sponsored by a consortium founded by administrators and operated by what he takes to be super administrators, he views it as a further demand on his time which might better be spent at his workbench. Further, he understands in his shrewd, petty craftsmanlike way that the real and tangible rewards come from his discipline, his department and home institution, not from a distant, impotent and rather abstract entity, the consortium.

Whatever openness the average faculty member may be endowed with vis-a-vis alternative educational structures under the best of cirumstances, similar to the visionary expansiveness of a shoemaker, he does not at present enjoy the best of circumstances. Recent developments have served to severely erode the morale and self-confidence of American university and college faculties. The initiative launched largely by the professorate to change the course of domestic and foreign policy has thus far failed, students in unrest and riot turned against their instructors and have now settled into quietly ignoring them, and most recently state legislatures and the public, in contrast to an earlier and happier period, have declared college teachers inefficient and ineffective. At the same time, contrary to the hallowed practices of graduate school and the academic tradition, they are being urged to adopt teaching methods which while flexible, creative and innovative are to be at the same time cheaper and more efficient. Caught in the crossfire of failure, rejection and contradictory demands, it is not entirely surprising that these shell-shocked veterans do not immediately recognize the stimulating possibilities of interinstitutional cooperation.

Those interested in promoting interinstitutional cooperation among faculty would do well to take these sources of natural and historical reluctance into account. If faculty members are to be enlisted in ventures of substantive cooperation, the pathways to activities which they recognize as important must be made as easy and swift as possible and the advantages to them as teachers and scholars must be immediate and palpable. Cooperative programs that require substantial contributions in the time and effort of a faculty member without either rather dramatic payoffs and/or release time and other special considerations are unlikely to get off the ground or, if they do, endure. Finally, despite the worthiness of cooperation and the consortial cause, even the likelihood that voluntary cooperation may figure as a progressive force in higher education, it is best promoted, I believe, with as little of the hot gospel of innovation and change as possible. The academic world in general and the faculty in particular have grown tired of that line.

This list of grim realities presents to those of us who believe in the importance of voluntary interinstitutional cooperation, as they say, some "exciting challenges." If the promises offered by cooperation are to be realized, cooperative efforts must be adequately funded and well administered and promoted with tolerance, patience, candor, and modesty.

Regionalism in New York State: A Plethora of Questions

Fritz H. Grupe

A source of issues likely to mandate a continuing debate by the higher education community is that of regionalism in higher education. Ohio, California, Illinois, Florida, and New York have each had brief flirtations with the idea in recent years. In New York, however, some tangible actions which have drawn national attention are being taken to institute regional agreements throughout the state. Unlike voluntary consortium arrangements of the past, the key element that is now present in these actions has been the pervasive involvement and initiative exercized by statewide agencies with the authority to use positive as well as coercive measures to enforce the measures recommended.

Persuasive arguments give rise to the support for regionalism. Neither voluntary cooperation, nor statewide planning has been capable of avoiding many of the economic and educational dilemmas confronting colleges and universities. To date, voluntary cooperation has not been able to lower financial and legal barriers that retard cooperation between public and private colleges. There are regional needs that have escaped remediation because the individual institutions would not recognize them. Duplications of programs and facilities have occurred. There is a demand, if not a need, for retrenchment, consolidation, and realignment of the resources that are made available to higher education.

Although a considerable amount of faith is still being placed upon the voluntary participation of institutions in "regional" programs, the primary motivating forces have come from the Board of Regents through its administrative arm, the State Education Department, and from the State University of New York. Despite their acceptance of congruent boundaries for defining eight basic regions, the differences between the two agencies are important.

The Board of Regents have asked for, received, and approved requests from three regions (New York City, Genesee Valley, and Northeast) to be recognized as Regional Councils. Regents Advisory Committees composed of representative area presidents and a few lay persons set policy for each Council. The primary function of these groups is aimed at planning. Task Forces for priority concerns such as libraries and graduate programs are established to study these problems and make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Regents. This step brings the regional planning effort into the statewide planning process.

Fritz H. Grupe is Executive Director of the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley. Previously he was with the College Center of the Finger Lakes and has written a dissertation and several articles on consortia.

The institution of operational programs has been the major outcome sought by the State University of New York. Projects such as an Arts Center in New York City, and upper division technology curriculums operated for different regions illustrate several recently discussed activities. Although a president from a State University institution has been selected to coordinate and stimulate regional activities, no structure has yet been established, nor is there an intent at this time to create a formal organization. Most activities have thus far been limited to State University of New York units.

At first glance, both approaches to regionalism parallel similar developments in purely voluntary consortia. What is there, then, about regionalism that is sufficiently significant to warrant the emergence of, what was at the Conference, countervailing criticisms of great concern? Presently, the moves toward regionalism are young in age, and of very limited detail vis-a-vis statewide implications. Accurate projections are impossible, and criticisms are necessarily hypothetical. Yet there are critics as well as advocates. The dialogue that has started will yield some not inconsequential results. What are some of the points of disagreement? What are some of the unanswered questions?

Planning. How does regional planning differ from statewide planning? Is it practical to maintain both types? Is regional planning a method of wielding questionable authority in a way that could not be accomplished at the statewide level? What is gained and what is lost by groups of institutions asking for recognition and approval by the state as a regional body?

Public-Private Distinctiveness. Will regionalism further blur the ever-diminishing distinction between independent and public institutions? To what extent does the willingness to participate in a regional venture facilitate the unnecessary exposure of private institutions to state budgetary and legal controls? How much of a long-term commitment does the state have to maintain whatever relationships are established? Can the creation of a regional reviewing board overseeing project proposals and new programs alter traditional assignments of the responsibility for institutional decision-making to an inappropriate level? Growing as it did out of Governor Rockefeller's request that state agencies indicate their ability to operate along planning lines prepared by the Office of Planning Coordination, does regionalism lay the groundwork for undesirable political involvement in private higher education?

Effectiveness. Beyond the first results of the "Hawthorne Effect" do the new proposals overcome any of the weaknesses of voluntary consortia? Does the large number of colleges and universities within regions prohibit truly effective cooperation to occur? At a time when the state is unable to commit any major amount of resources to regionalism, is the potential for regionalism being destroyed without being tested? Will the reliance upon coercive methods of enforcement through accreditation and registration of programs, through state institutional aid to private higher education, or through state administered aid to private institutions become an irrevocable appendage to "accountability?"

Admittedly, the questions posed could be equally as well stated to emphasize the detrimental effects on higher education that could transpire if regionalism does not occur. To be sure, many persons cynically see regionalism as "the punishment to fit the crime." Years of opportunity for private and public colleges and universities to cooperate voluntarily have passed without hard questions having been given their just consideration, and without difficult decisions having been made. It may be as Max Wise put it so pessimistically at the Conference that (regionalism came about because) "interinstitutional cooperation is an idea whose time is past." It might also be that its time never really came. Regionalism is an important development that shall not easily escape detection.

Voluntary Cooperation and Statewide Coordination in Massachusetts

Lawrence E. Fox

Voluntary cooperation with the assistance of moderate state coordination has an excellent chance to succeed in Massachusetts. There are three reasons for this prediction; existing and growing cooperative activity, open-mindedness at the state level, and a large well-developed private sector.

Massachusetts currently houses two active, general purpose higher education consortia: Five Colleges, Inc. in Amherst and the Worcester Consortium for Higher Education in Worcester. In greater Boston, where there are over thirty colleges, individual cooperative efforts are beginning to appear. The colleges in the Fenway section of Boston are grouping for project action. Groups of college presidents are now in closed-door sessions trying to break away from unilateral operations. The University of Massachusetts is working with a large private university on joint academic programs. Numerous other beginnings in inter-institution endeavors are being made.

Lawrence E. Fox is Executive Director of the Worcester Consortium for Higher Education, a group of eleven diverse higher educational institutions in the Worcester, Massachusetts area.

The State Board of Higher Education is the Massachusetts coordinating agency. Its most important functions and powers are coordination rather than regulation. The primary concern of the Board is college places for Massachusetts residents, and these places need not be exclusively in the public sector. The Board is open to consider public-private contractual arrangements or other patterns of cooperation. It is also the Board's responsibility to administer the State's scholarship fund. By law, seventy-five per cent of the fund must be awarded to residents enrolled in the more than fifty private colleges in Massachusetts. Presently the fund stands at eight million dollars.

The Board is working on a master plan which will include arrangements for cooperative ventures among the colleges, both private and public. The plan should be completed in 1973. The Board's open attitude coupled with its relatively small budget prevents it from being a powerful agency in the negative sense of the term power. Cast in the role of facilitator and moderator, it can be extremely helpful in sustaining the cooperative spirit without crushing it in a power squeeze.

The third reason for optimism concerning voluntary cooperation is the large Massachusetts private college sector. With fifty-two members, the private colleges have formed AICUM (Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts). While its earliest purpose was to improve the financial position of its members through state subsidy, it has broadened its goals far beyond its original purpose. AICUM provides the base for communication and cooperation which could be productive now and in the future.

Closer relationships among the private colleges have been fostered through adversity and common interest. For example, a group of private four-year colleges in the western part of the state have joined together to recruit and accept transfer students from the two-year colleges. Regardless of motive, this action represents a dramatic departure from the earlier standoff attitude toward the two-year college graduate. The fact that this recruiting effort is a joint venture is also significant. It leads to other things.

The important fact about private college cooperation is that it is a response to existing conditions, voluntarily made, rather than a response to a state board mandate. In making these efforts, private colleges have the moral support of state agencies since so many people working in the agencies are products of the private sector. At the state level the officials have an understanding and feeling for private education.

Finally, one of the most compelling reasons for moderate state coordination versus strong activity at the state level is money. More accurately, it is the lack of state money and thereby the lack of a powerful stimulator or enforcer. There is no aid to private colleges other than minimal scholarship assistance. Therefore, there is little state leverage and the private sector must stimulate itself.

There is little likelihood that state money will become available in significant amounts. But there is some effort to divert funds earmarked for capital expenditures in the public sector in a circuitous fashion. With empty spaces in the private sector an argument is being made against increasing physical plant in the state sector. The alternative proposed is a cooperative contract arrangement whereby normally public-sector-bound students will be accommodated in private colleges. The state would pay the private college some agreed upon support figure as an alternative to increasing the capital expenditure for physical plant. If this happens the state role in coordination will increase.

All people and organizations claim to be unique. Massachusetts is different, not unique. Literally the birthplace of private higher education, it paid little attention to its public sector until as late as ten years ago. Now the stage is set as the rapidly expanding public sector can deal with private colleges on a more equal footing. The prognosis for voluntary cooperation is good.

Consortium Needs and Opportunities: Reflections of a Consortium Director

Herbert H. Wood

When one considers that the Conference was the first ever to assemble college and university faculty administrators and their consortium directors from a variety of consortia, it would be natural to expect a few insights that might be called surprises or even the first significant confirmation of one's suspicions of the general nature of certain persisting problems.

1) Provincialism. In addition to the sort of provincialism a consortium director might note on each of his campuses, a provincialism has been developing in the consortium, too. It is evidenced in the expected role of the director, how he should express his views, what the proper domain of a consortium might be, and where all this activity will lead. Results of the Conference suggest that cooperation is more widespread and significant than participants with limited experience had believed. Further, as a result of the strong case put by the speakers, some form of coordination appears to be inevitable.

2) Inadequate communications. There is too little communication vertically (faculty-dean-president) within each member institution to permit a consortium to function efficiently. This is a problem for participating institutions as well. Much more attention must be paid to this problem than might at first appear to be required. It is not sufficient for recommendations to go in one direction or for consortium staff to carry the messages back and forth. Progress at the consortium level in this matter would have a powerful influence upon a similar development within each campus and that would not be a peripheral impact!

3) Lack of understanding of a consortium director's role. Seeing consortium directors for what they are and, as change agents, what they have the potential to do, will require some getting used to by faculty and administrators alike. There will be a reluctant acceptance of this naturally emerging role, external and unprecedented as it is. This more forceful role may lead some faculty to react by saying, "Who gave you permission to come riding in on a white charger?" A simpler and less correct view of the director's role seems to be afforded greater acceptance, namely as a practitioner of grantsmanship and as a clever entrepreneur. The conflict between the simpler traditional role expectation and the role evolving from his work should haunt the consortium director for some time yet.

Herbert H. Wood was President of the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education for eight years and is currently Executive Director of GT-70, a management-oriented consortium of junior and community colleges.

4) Inter-consortia faculty contact needed. The various faculty members engaged in consortium affairs would appear to benefit from direct observation and contact with other consortia much more than might at first be expected. It is not enough for consortium directors to exchange experience and newsletters which carry brief descriptions of who is doing what. The novelty of this new type of cooperative role for faculty and deans requires personal contact to provide the details and reassurances.

5) Consortium goals. In consortium operations, every year begins the consortium anew. What the institutions are trying to do through cooperation and what kind of programs seem to be most successful must be reviewed each year. A consortium's membership, by and large, has difficulty establishing and updating its purposes and goals and in communicating them to the faculty, a pattern which needs changing.

6) Some consortium activities that deserve more attention and support: small creative opportunity grants, assigned by consortium committees throughout the year to support faculty generated projects involving two or more institutions; a ten-year longitudinal study of an institution participating in an active consortium in order to measure institutional changes as a result of the relationship; a continuing study of the emerging role of the consortium director as a factor in contemporary developments in higher education.

All of the above comments indicate both needs and opportunities for consortia to take seriously if they are to become meaningful components of the higher educational enterprise.

CONFERENCE SUMMARY: THE OUTLOOK FOR VOLUNTARY COOPERATION

The title of Robert Berdahl's speech, "Cooperation in Higher Education: The Possibilities and Necessities" provides a nice summary of the major issues of the Conference on Consortia. A good portion of the Conference discussions concerned the "possibilities" for cooperation. What are the possibilities? Can we learn to cooperate better? What cooperative programs have worked well for other consortia? What are the best structures?

The "necessities" of cooperation received equal if not more attention. Both major lecturers, Berdahl and Wise, agreed that greater cooperation was the wave of the future. The important question is not will cooperation come? But how will it come? On what terms?

The Conference provided different answers, which can be summarized in three groupings. One group maintained that voluntary cooperation, through voluntary consortia similar to existing arrangements, still has a chance for major impact in higher education. Berdahl and a second group argued that only through state influence (the "state stick" and the "green carrot") can cooperation come about; voluntary consortia have a possible role to play (with state backing) only if they can produce meaningful cooperation among colleges and universities. Wise and a third group contended that state control in one form or another will eventually result; voluntary consortia are arriving with too little and are too late.

The issue of voluntary cooperation vs. state-enforced coordination was not resolved by the Conference. However, although it is a difficult judgment to make, it appeared that a substantial portion of the Conference participants, including this writer, favored the second or middle position articulated above – or something close to it. Voluntary cooperation still has a chance, but only if meaningful arrangements among colleges and universities are forthcoming. The question of the future of voluntary consortia is not yet closed. Consortia have an opportunity to become a comparatively permanent fixture in higher education, and even if they fail in this wise, they can play an important role in setting the tone for a better, more benevolent form of state control. (Statewide planning, as Berdahl mentioned, cannot and ought not be abandoned, but we do need to be concerned with "civilizing" it.)

In either role, permanent or interim, voluntary consortia can be helpful to higher education. And while the issue is being settled, there are plenty of people to be served now through the consortium mechanism. Should we wait for the State of Alabama to bring together black and white, public and private, rural and urban, church-related and non-sectarian institutions in a fashion similar to the existing Alabama Consortium for the Development of Higher Education? Should we wait for the State of New York to produce innovative programs similar to the College Center of the Finger Lakes or the Associated Colleges of the

St. Lawrence Valley? Should we wait for the State of Georgia to foster greater cooperation among the black institutions in the Atlanta University Center? Should we wait for the State of California to produce an Urban Center similar to the one proposed by the San Francisco Consortium? Should we wait for the State of Massachusetts to build upon the important agreements already reached by the Worcester Consortium for Higher Education and the Five Colleges, Inc.? Should we wait for the States of Missouri, Kansas and Illinois to form cooperative agreements in the metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis, already covered by existing consortia? The waiting period in most cases might be rather long.

Voluntary consortia do have a chance, but they must show themselves to be in the public interest. They must demonstrate that they can produce money-saving efficiency (as emphasized by North Burn, Executive Director of the Five Colleges, Inc. at the Conference), that they can provide improved educational services and expanded opportunities, that they can assist individual institutions in sorting out their roles and missions through cooperative planning.

A brief illustration perhaps best describes the outcome of the Conference on Consortia. A minister sent his daughter out on her first date. She returned the next morning at about 6:00 a.m. The minister, who had waited by the door for her all night, noted that she appeared somewhat disheveled, and at the same time was carrying a Gideon Bible. The weary minister's reaction to this little scene was, "My cynicism is mixed with hope." The Conference on Consortia led at least this writer to feel that cynicism about the future of voluntary consortia should be mixed with hope.

William Nelsen
Program Executive
The Danforth Foundation

THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Thursday, April 27

Opening Session

Introduction to the Conference

William C. Nelsen, Program Executive, The Danforth Foundation

Keynote Address: "Cooperation in Higher Education: The Possibilities and Necessities"

Dr. Robert O. Berdahl, Professor of Higher Education, SUNY, Buffalo, Author, *Statewide Coodination of Higher Education* (ACE)

Friday, April 28

Faculty Panel: "Institutional Cooperation and Educational Development: Key Issue Areas"

Panel Chairman: Lewis Patterson, KCRCHE

Urban Affairs: Leslie L. Bennett, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco Consortium

Faculty Development: Walter Bailey, Baker University, KCRCHE

Educational Programs for the Disadvantaged: Roger Sayers, University of Alabama, ACDHE

The Consortium and the Community: Lawrence Fox, Worcester Consortium, John Kane, Anna Maria College, John O'Connor, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Financial Planning: North Burn, Coordinator, Five Colleges, Inc.

Group Discussion Sessions: "The Obstacles to Academic Cooperation"

Introduction to the sessions: B. Richard Berg, the Lindenwood Colleges, HECC

Faculty and Administrator Sub-Groups

Faculty Panel: "The Obstacles to Academic Cooperation"

Panel Chairman: Thomas J. Diener, University of Alabama

Edward Brantley, Clark College, Atlanta University Center Corporation

Gene S. Cesari, Elmira College, College Center of the Finger Lakes

Edwin G. Eigel, St. Louis University, HECC

Howard Foster, Alabama A & M University, ACDHE

Paul Francis, Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester Consortium for Higher Education

John Reynolds, Clark University, Worcester Consortium for Higher Education

Alan H. Stillman, State University College at Potsdam, Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley

Address: "The Possibilities for Voluntary Cooperation: A Critique"

W. Max Wise, Professor of Higher Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Saturday, April 29

Consortium Directors' Panel: "The Consortium as an Agent for Educational Change"

Panel Chairman: Herbert H. Wood, KCRCHE

Doris P. Bryan, HECC

Lawrence E. Fox, Worcester Consortium for Higher Education, Inc.

Edgar C. Cumings, San Francisco Consortium

Fritz H. Grupe, Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley

Lillian C. Manley, ACDHE

Gary H. Quehl, College Center of the Finger Lakes

Prince E. Wilson, Atlanta University Center

Conference Summary and Closing Remarks – William C. Nelsen

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

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Axelrod, Bernard	Westminster College	
Bailey, Walter	Baker University	KCRCHE
Barnett, Howard A.	The Lindenwood Colleges	
Bayliss, Brad	Missouri Valley College	KCRCHE
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Bennett, Leslie I.	University of California San Francisco	San Francisco Consortium
Berdahl, Robert O.	State University of New York at Buffalo	
Berg, B. Richard	The Lindenwood Colleges	HECC
Brandt, Ogden G.	St. Lawrence University	Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley
Brantley, Edward	Clark College	Atlanta University Center
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Burn, North	Five Colleges, Inc.	
Carroll, Richard	Spelman College	Atlanta University Center
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Grupe, Fritz H.	Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley	
Hay, Francis T.	Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education	
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Hill, Edwin	Drury College	
Hubert, Willis	Morehouse College	Atlanta University Center
Hudson, Frederic M.	Lone Mountain College	San Francisco Consortium
Jackson, Julia F.	Morris Brown College	Atlanta University Center
Johnson, Alandus	Miles College	ACDHE
Johnson, B. Lamar	League for Innovation in the Community College	
Johnson, Donald A.	Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center	
Kane, John	Anna Maria College	Worcester Consortium for Higher Education
Malone, Lawrence	University of Montevallo	ACDHE
Manley, Albert E.	Spelman College	Atlanta University Center
Manley, Lillian	Alabama Consortium for the Development of Higher Education	
Marsh, Charles J.	Golden Gate College	San Francisco Consortium
Nelsen, William C.	The Danforth Foundation	
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Patterson, Lewis D.	Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education	
Popp, Frank D.	Clarkson College of Technology	Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley

Quehl, Gary H.	College Center of the Finger Lakes	
Reynolds, John	Clark University	Worcester Consortium for Higher Education
Roy, Donald	Cazenovia College	College Center of the Finger Lakes
Sayers, Roger	University of Alabama	ACDHE
Schwartz, Bruce	College Center of the Finger Lakes	
Schwenkmeyer, Barry	Academy for Educational Development	
Selig, John M.	City College of San Francisco	San Francisco Consortium
Shipp, Clifford M.	William Woods College	
Smith, Arden K.	Central Pennsylvania Consortium	
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Stumpe, Richard	Harris Teachers College	HECC
Tollefson, Dean E.	Union of Independent Colleges of Art	
Top, Willard	Huntingdon College	ACDHE
Uffelmann, Hans	University of Missouri, Kansas City	KCRCHE
Walker, Harold E.	Academic Affairs Conference of Midwestern Universities	
Walker, Lynn	William Jewell College	KCRCHE
Walters, Everett	University of Missouri, St. Louis	HECC
Widman, Gary C.	University of California San Francisco	San Francisco Consortium
Wilson, Prince E.	Atlanta University Center	
Wise, W. Max	Teachers College, Columbia University	
Wood, Herbert H.	Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education	
Zimmerman, W. David	Danforth Foundation Institute for College Development	

Special Guests:

Bailey, James M.	HECC Board	
Blackburn, Robert	Washington University	HECC
Brown, John Anthony	The Lindenwood Colleges	HECC
Brucker, Mary	The Danforth Foundation	
Danforth, William H.	Washington University	HECC
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Elsea, Robert D.	HECC Board	
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Horner, Timothy	HECC Board	
Joseph, Warren	Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville	HECC
Madden, Charles	Webster College	
Reinert, Paul C., S.J.	St. Louis University	HECC
Riley, John Marie	Fontbonne College	HECC
Schmidt, Roberta	Fontbonne College	HECC
Shapleigh, Jane	HECC Board	
Switzer, Harriet Kern	Maryville College	HECC

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